

**REMARKS**

In the above-identified Office Action, the Examiner has required claims 8-9 to be cancelled. By the above amendments this matter has been obviated.

Claim 2 and claims 5-7 have been objected to as being in improper form. Applicant has changed the dependencies of claims 5-7 as being solely on claim 1 and, accordingly, this objection is considered obviated.

Claims 1-3, 5 and 6 have been rejected as clearly anticipated by Zuniga. Applicant has amended Zuniga so that it now recites that there is a means for restricting movements of the retainer ring and the chuck so as to maintain a fluctuation of a gap between the retainer ring and the chuck within a predetermined range during the polishing operation. Zuniga does not show the fluctuation of a gap between the retainer ring and the chuck within a predetermined range. Zuniga has a flexure diaphragm 116 clamped between base 104 and retaining ring 110, which is clamped between the support ring and the lower clamp. A flexure diaphragm is a generally planar annular ring (column 5, lines 48-49). Zuniga does not teach the existence of play in its attachment between the support structure and the base. In applicant's structure, on the other hand, as set forth on page 17 of the specification, the gap that is created between the retainer ring and the wafer chuck, fluctuates within a specified range. In a further embodiment, on page 22 of the specification, it is taught that in order to maintain the oscillation within a fixed range, a through-hole with a prescribed clearance to the guide pins is provided in the guide pin receivers. Thus, as recited in the claims, applicant permits the retainer ring and the chuck to move so as to create a gap between the two, which gap fluctuates within a limited range. Neither Zuniga nor Kajiwara teach or suggest such a concept.

Applicant requests reconsideration and re-examination thereof.

With the above amendments and remarks, this application is considered ready for allowance. Applicant hereby earnestly solicits early notice of same. Should the Examiner be of the opinion that a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of the subject application, he is respectfully requested to call the undersigned at the below listed number.

Respectfully submitted,  
**WELSH & KATZ, LTD.**



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